

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /057 W

----- 103175

R 121035Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3551

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 2333

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : PFOR, SA, TC

SUBJECT : PRINCE FAHD VISIT TO UAE

1. PRINCE FAHD ARRIVED IN ABU DHABI NOVEMBER 11 WITH MORE FANFARE AND HOOPLA THAN WE HAVE SEEN EXTENDED TO ANY CHIEF OF STATE HERE. ASIDE FROM USUAL ARTILLERY SALUTE AND HONOR GUARD CEREMONIES, GOVERNMENT PUT UP PICTURES OF FAHD EVERYWHERE AND TRUCKED IN HUNDREDS OF CITIZENS TO GIVE WELCOME AN ATMOSPHERE OF POPULAR ACCLAIM. FIVE OF SEVEN RULERS (AND ALL THE IMPORTANT ONES) WERE ON HAND AT AIRPORT TO GREET FAHD. EXCEPTIONAL EFFORT SHAIKH ZAYID PUT INTO WELCOME ATTESTS TO HIGH IMPORTANCE HE AND HIS ADVISORS ATTACH TO FAHD'S INFLUENCE AT THIS CRITICAL MOMENT IN UAE INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

2. ALTHOUGH RESOLVING LINGERING PROBLEMS IN ABU DHABI/SAUDI BORDER AGREEMENT MAY ALSO BE SUBJECT OF TALKS HERE, MAIN INTEREST OF ZAYID AND SUWAIDI IS TO GET FAHD TO LEAN ON SHAIKH RASHID OF DUBAI TO COME TO SOME COMPROMISE ON MERGER OF MILITARY AND SECURITY FORCES AS RECOMMENDED BY MILITARY EXPERTS FROM JORDAN, SAUDI ARABIA, AND KUWAIT. THROUGHOUT OFFICIAL DINNER LAST NIGHT

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RASHID LOOKED TIRED AND UNCOMFORTABLE. WE CAN IMAGINE HE IS

HIGHLY IRRITATED AT WHOLE EXERCISE. FAHD IS LUNCHING WITH HIM TODAY AND IS RETURNING TO SAUDI ARABIA LATER THIS AFTERNOON.

3. IN MEANWHILE SHAIKH HAMED OF FUJAIRAH HAS PREDICTABLY JOINED FEDERAL BANDWAGON WITH TELEVISED NEWS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE PLUGGED NECESSITY FOR STRONGER FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. PUBLIC ONUS FOR "BLOCKING" FEDERATION IS THEREFORE BEING MADE TO FALL INCREASINGLY ON AN ISOLATED SHAIKH RASHID. ALTHOUGH WE IMAGINE HE IS FEELING THE PRESSURE AND DOES NOT LIKE IT, IT IS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN THAT HE WILL FEEL FORCED TO TAKE STEP HE DOES NOT WANT TO. HE IS SLIPPERY OLD GENT AND COULD WELL GIVE IMPRESSION HE WAS COMING ALONG ON SOME FORM OF COMPROMISE AND FORGET ALL ABOUT IT ONCE SAUDI CROWN PRINCE HAS DEPARTED.

4. OUTCOME WILL ALSO DEPEND ON HOW MUCH WEIGHT FAHD WILL PUT BEHIND HIS SUPPORT FOR ZAYID ON THIS QUESTION. FROM EVERYTHING WE HEAR HERE, SAUDIS GENUINELY SUPPORT STRONGER UNITY AMONG SHAIKHDOMS, BUT PAST SAUDI BEHAVIOR ALSO SUGGESTS WARINESS ABOUT BEING DRAWN TOO DEEPLY INTO UAE DOMESTIC DISPUTES. FURTHER FACTOR IS THAT SAUDI-ZAYID FRIENDSHIP IS FLOWER OF ONLY RECENT BLOOM, WHEREAS FOR LONG WHILE BEFORE THIS SAUDIS

HAD MUCH STRONGER RELATIONS WITH RULERS OF DUBAI AND RAS AL KHAIMAH.

5. ON THE WHOLE, DEBATE OVER UAE INTERNAL EVOLUTION HAS BEEN CONDUCTED WITH GREAT DEAL OF PATIENCE AND PUBLIC DECORUM (IF NOT EXACTLY GOOD FEELING) BY ALL CONCERNED HERE. BUT TEMPERATURES ON THIS ISSUE HAVE RISEN IN LAST FEW WEEKS. ONE EXAMPLE OF THIS WAS INTERVIEW GIVEN TO LOCAL PRESS BY UAE AMBASSADOR TO LONDON MAHDI TAJIR, WHO PLUGGED FEDERAL UNITY AND LAMBASTED DUPLICATION IN ECONOMIC PROJECTS CAUSED BY COMPETITION AMONG EMIRATES. PEOPLE HERE--EVEN SUPPORTERS OF STRONGER FEDERATION--WERE ASTONISHED AT THE FORCE OF HIS LANGUAGE AND CONSIDERED PERFORMANCE ILL-CONSIDERED. OBVIOUSLY STUNG BY TAJIR'S ATTACK, RAS AL KHAIMAH "INFORMATION OFFICE" PUBLISHED STATEMENT NEXT DAY HINTING THAT TAJIR, WITH PERSONAL

INVESTMENTS IN MOST OF THESE PROJECTS, WAS HIMSELF PRIME PERPETRATOR OF DUPLICATION.

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6. AS STEADY AND REASONABLE A MAN AS SAIF GHUBBASH COMMENTED TO ME THAT IT IS A PITY THAT CONSENSUS BETWEEN ZAYID AND RASHID COULD NOT HAVE BEEN WORKED OUT BEFORE ISSUE BECAME ONE OF PUBLIC PRESSURE CAMPAIGN. WE WOULD AGREE. PUBLIC OPINION IN UAE IS A PUSSY CAT AT PRESENT BUT ONCE FED AND EXERCISED IT COULD TURN INTO A TIGER IN FUTURE YEARS. STERNER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, FOREIGN RELATIONS, CHIEF OF STATE VISITS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ABUDH02333
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750393-0856
From: ABU DHABI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751152/aaaabucp.tel
Line Count: 114
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <17 NOV 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: : PRINCE FAHD VISIT TO UAE
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, OVIP, SA, TC, (FAHD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006